

lungs, “Whatever it takes.” I remember seeing a man who had been in the rubble, looking for his buddy. He grabbed me by the arm, and he said, “Do not let me down.” Ever since that day, I wake up trying to do my best to protect this country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, as I traveled this great State asking for the vote, I made a pledge that if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Remarks in Hobbs, New Mexico October 11, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming out. It’s nice to be back in a part of the world that I know very well. I was raised right around the corner. It’s good to be in a part of the world where the cowboy hats outnumber the ties. It’s good to be in a part of the world where people believe in their family and their faith and their country.

I want to thank all the people from Lea County, New Mexico, for coming here today. I’m proud you’re here. Thanks for organizing this great event. I want to thank the people from Eddy County who are here. When I was a little guy, I distinctly remember going to Carlsbad Caverns. I went with the Cub Scout troop. It just so happened the den mother was my mother. [Laughter] I think that’s when her hair started to go white. [Laughter] Appreciate the people from Chaves being here as well.

I want to thank my friends who’ve come over from the great State of Texas. I’m proud you all are here. I really appreciate the Flying Eagles from Hobbs being here. Thank you for being here in the band. Still

Thanks for coming. God bless. God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:10 p.m. at Center City Park. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister John Howard of Australia; Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. He also referred to the “Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq’s WMD,” issued September 30.

play pretty good basketball? [Applause] Yes. That’s what I figured. [Laughter]

I’m here to ask for your vote. That’s what I’m here to do. By the way, I don’t know if you know this, but I’m the first sitting President to have ever visited Hobbs, New Mexico. I may just be the first sitting President to have visited, and the first person who’s the President who’s ever been here before he was President. [Laughter] All I can tell you is the other ones missed a lot by not coming to Hobbs, New Mexico.

I’m also here to ask for your help. You know, last time, in New Mexico, we lost by just a little over 600 votes. If every one of you all takes somebody to the polls come voting time, we’ll win. So I’m here to thank you for what you’re going to do. You’re going to convince our fellow citizens to do their duty and vote. And when you’re turning people out to the polls, don’t overlook discerning Democrats, people like Zell Miller who understands that if you want a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America, to put me and Dick Cheney back in office.

I'm keeping really good company today. I'm proud to be traveling with one of our twin daughters, Jenna Bush. This is the camping trip I promised to take her on when she was a kid. [Laughter]

Jenna and I just said goodbye to a great First Lady. You know, when I asked Laura to marry me, she said, "Fine, just so long as I never have to give a political speech." I said, "You got a deal." [Laughter] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that. The American people have seen not only a great speaker, when she speaks, but they've seen a graceful, compassionate, great First Lady. I like to tell people, you know, I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm real proud of George P. Bush. Now, his dad is my brother, and he's the Governor of Florida. So if he's listening, turn out that vote. [Laughter]

I want to thank my Vice President. I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney. He's a good, solid, strong American.

I really am pleased to be working with a great United States Congressman from this part of the world. I'm proud of the job that Steve Pearce is doing. He brings that eastern New Mexico commonsense to Washington, DC. He's down-to-earth. He's smart. He's capable. He's doing you a great job in the House of Representatives. Laura and I are fond of Cynthia, his wife, and he kindly introduced me to his mother, Jane, today. I said to her, I said, "Is Steve still listening to you?" She said, "About half the time." [Laughter] I said, "Well, that sounds like me and my mother." [Laughter]

With us today as well is a fellow running for Congress across the State line, named Randy Neugebauer. I know Randy. I trust his judgment. He's a good, honest man. He's a man that I can work with. It is important that the people of west Texas send Randy Neugebauer back to the United States Congress.

I want to thank all the other State and local officials. I want to thank the members of my team who are here of Hispanic origin. The head of the SBA is here today, Hector Barreto; Rosario Marin, who's a former U.S. Treasurer; the White House Counsel, Alberto Gonzales, is with us today. These folks are here to help us inspire the Hispanic vote to come our way. *Con su apoyo, vamos a ganar.*

See, my message is for everybody. When I say a hopeful America, I'm just not talking about one segment of the country, I'm talking about every single person when it comes to a hopeful America.

I want to thank my friend Mark Wills. He's a good singer. Nice of him to be here today. I'm proud he's here.

I particularly want to thank all the grass-roots activists, the people involved with turning out the vote and making the phone calls. I know you've done a lot of hard work. First of all, it takes a lot of hard work to get this many people to show up. [Laughter] If you put the same amount of work you put into getting this rally going to getting people to the polls, there's no doubt in my mind we'll carry New Mexico and win a great victory in November.

We had a great debate on Friday night. As you can tell, I'm kind of working my way west for the final debate. Our debates have highlighted the clear differences between the Senator and me on issues ranging from jobs to taxes to health care and to the war on terror. Much as he tries to obscure it, on issue after issue he has shown why he earned the ranking as the most liberal Member of the United States Senate. Several of his statements the other night simply don't pass the credibility test.

With a straight face, he said he'd had only one position on Iraq. [Laughter] He must think we're on another planet. [Laughter] In the spring of 2003, as I ordered the invasion of Iraq, Senator Kerry said, "It was the right decision." Now he says, "It's the wrong war." In the same debate, he said Saddam was a threat. Then

a few minutes later, he said there wasn't a threat in Iraq. And now he tries to tell us he's had only one position. Who's he trying to kid? [*Laughter*] He can run, but he cannot hide.

With another straight face, he tried to tell Americans that when it comes to his health care plan, and I quote, "The Government has nothing to do with it." [*Laughter*] The facts are that 8 out of 10 people who get health care under Senator Kerry's plan would be placed on a Government program. He can run, but he cannot hide.

Then he was asked to look into the camera—[*laughter*—and promise he would not raise taxes for anyone who earns less than \$200,000 a year. The problem is, to keep that promise he'd have to break almost all his other promises. [*Laughter*] His plan to raise taxes on the top two income brackets would raise about \$600 billion according to our counters, about \$800 billion according to his planners—counters. The problem is, is that his spending plans will cost almost four times as much, \$2.2 trillion. You can't have it both ways. To pay for all the big spending programs he's outlined during his campaign, he's going to have to raise your taxes. See, he can run, but he cannot hide.

You know, listening—after listening to that litany of complaints and the dour pessimism, it took all I could do not to make a face. [*Laughter*] I have a different view, a different philosophy, and a strong record to be running on. I've worked hard to make this country a more hopeful place and a more secure place. I've led our country with principle and resolve, and that's how I'll continue to lead this Nation.

The world in which we live and work is changing. Workers switch jobs more than they used to. Women are working in the home and outside the home as well. That means they need new skills and benefits they can take with them from job to job. Yet many of the most fundamental systems of our Government, the Tax Code, the health care, pension plans, and worker

training, were created for a world of yesterday, not tomorrow. I'm running for 4 more years to transform these systems to help citizens realize their dreams.

And a plan—any plan, any strategy for a hopeful America begins with a growing economy that creates good jobs. See, I believe in the energy and innovation and spirit of our workers and our small-business owners and our farmers and our ranchers. And that's why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation.

When you're out rounding up the vote, you might remind people of what we've been through, what this economy has been through. The stock market started to go down 6 months prior to my arrival in Washington, DC. See, and that was—that foretold the recession that came. So we had the stock market correction and a recession. We had some corporate scandals which affected our economy. By the way, we passed tough laws. We have made it abundantly clear that we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then the enemy hit us. And that cost our economy one million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

No, we've been through a lot, but we acted. Because we passed tax relief, this economy is growing. It's getting stronger, and we're not going to go back to the old days of tax and spend. The past 13 months, we've added 1.9 million new jobs. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, which is lower than the average of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. State unemployment rate in New Mexico is 5.4 percent. People are working. People are finding a way to make a living. Our farmers are doing well. Our ranchers are doing well. The homeownership rate in America is at an alltime high.

We're moving forward, and there's more to do. To make sure quality jobs are here, created here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means less regulations on the job creators. That means we got to do something

about these frivolous lawsuits that are making it hard to expand the job base.

Listen, to make sure this economy continues to grow, Congress needs to pass my energy plan. I put a plan up there that encourages conservation, that understands we can use renewables like ethanol and biodiesel. It's a plan that also recognizes that we can explore for natural gas in environmentally friendly ways. It's a plan that recognizes we can use clean coal technology. At the heart of my plan is the understanding that in order to create jobs here, America must become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. And people around here know what I'm talking about.

To create jobs, we need to keep people and businesses safe from wildfires. That's why I worked with Congress to pass the Healthy Forests Restoration Act. It's an important piece of legislation for much of your State. This good law allows us to thin out the underbrush that damages our forests and serves as kindling for fires. It's a commonsense measure that's protected communities all across the West. I was proud to work on it, and I was proud to sign it into law. Both the Republican Senator from this State—and by the way, Pete Domenici is a good one. He's a fine man. Both the Republican Senator and the Democrat Senator from New Mexico supported the Healthy Forests bill. But my opponent was against it. Now he says he likes parts of the law. I guess it's not only the wildfires that shift in the wind. *[Laughter]*

To create jobs, we've got to reject economic isolationism and open up markets. Listen, we've opened up the markets for products from overseas, and it's good for you as consumers. See, here's the way the market works. If you've got more products to choose from, you're likely to get that which you want at a better price and higher quality. That's how it works. So what I'm saying to places like China, "You treat us the way we treat you. You open up your markets." And I'm saying that because I know we can compete with anybody, any-

time, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

To create jobs here and to make sure this economy grows, we got to keep your taxes low. Taxes are an issue in this campaign. We talked about them in the last debate, and I hope we talk about them in the next debate. See, he's saying, "Oh, don't worry, I can pay for all my programs by taxing the rich." We've heard that before, haven't we?

Audience members. [Inaudible]

The President. Yes, you know how it works. First of all, as I told you, he doesn't have enough money to pay for all his programs. There's a tax gap, and guess who usually gets stuck filling the hole? Yes, you do. Something else about taxing the rich, the rich hire lawyers and accountants for a reason: to dodge the tax bill and stick you with it. We're not going to let him do it to you; we're going to win in November.

To build a more hopeful America, we've got to have the best prepared and most highly skilled workforce in the world. It all starts with education. I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. I went to Washington, DC, to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations, to challenge those systems that would just shuffle the kids through, year after year, grade after grade, without teaching them the basics. See, we have a optimistic outlook. I learned it being out here where the sky is big. I believe every child can learn. I believe that. That's why we've raised the standards. That's why we believe in local control of schools. And that's why we measure, so we can solve problems early, before it is too late.

The achievement gap in America is closing. We're not going back to those old days of mediocrity in our schools. *No dejaremos a ningun nino atras*—we will leave no child behind.

Listen, most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college education, yet only one in four of our students

gets there. That's why we've got to fund early intervention programs for at-risk students in high schools. That's why we've got to emphasize math and science. That's why, over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and by expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college degree.

I'm a big supporter of the community college system here in America. See, I believe that community colleges can be used wisely to make sure our workers gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

And to make sure our country is more hopeful, we need to make health care more affordable and more available. We need a safety net for those with the greatest needs. I believe every poor county in America ought to have a community health center, places where the poor and the indigent can get the health care they need. I believe we've got to expand those community health centers. Since I've been President, we've opened more than 600—expanded or opened more than 600. There's more to do. We got more to do to make sure our poor children are fully subscribed in programs for low-income families so they get the health care they need.

There's more we can do to make sure health care is affordable. Most of the uninsured are employees of small businesses. In order to make sure families can get the insurance they need, we ought to allow small businesses to pool together, to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same discount that big companies can buy insurance. We'll make sure health savings accounts are available to all, so workers in small businesses are able to pay lower premiums and people can save tax-free in a health care account they call their own.

To make sure health care is available and affordable, we've got to do something about the junk lawsuits that are running good

doctors out of practice and running up the costs of your health care. You can't be pro-doctor, pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-trial-lawyer at the same time. [Laughter] I think you have to choose. And my opponent made his choice, and he put a trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform—now. No, there's a big difference in health care. We'll talk about it Wednesday night. But in all we do to improve health care, we will make sure that the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

I went to Washington to solve problems, not to pass them on. And I felt we had a problem when it came to making sure our seniors got good, modern medicine. Medicare is a vital program, yet it wasn't keeping pace with the changes in medicine. Let me give you an example. We'd pay thousands of dollars for heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. That didn't make any sense. It didn't make any sense for our seniors, and it didn't make any sense for the taxpayers. So I worked with Republicans and Democrats to strengthen Medicare. In 2006, our seniors will be able to get prescription drugs in the Medicare program. Medicare is changing for the better. Our seniors will get a modern health care program, and we're not going to go back to the old days.

Let me talk about the retirement systems for a second. In the 2000 campaign, I remember distinctly our seniors being told on television ads that, "If George W. gets elected, you won't get your check." I don't know if they ran those kinds of ads here in New Mexico or not. I bet they did—yes. Well, the seniors got their checks. See, and that's the same kind of rhetoric you're going to hear again, because I'm going to talk about strengthening Social Security. But when I do so, I want you to remember

that if you're getting your Social Security check, nothing is going to change. No matter what the political rhetoric is, you're going to continue to get your check, just like we said you would. If you're a baby boomer, we're in pretty good shape when it comes to Social Security.

But when it—but for our younger folks here in America, for our children and grandchildren, we need to think differently about whether or not the Social Security system is going to be viable for them. I believe younger workers ought to be able to take some of their own tax money and set up a personal savings account so they can get a better rate of interest on the money being accumulated for their retirement.

In times of change, there are some things that don't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In changing times, we will support the institutions that give our lives direction and purpose, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. We stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. And we stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. We've got a strategy that's clear. We're defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. I will make sure the All-Volunteer Army remains

the All-Volunteer Army. We're reforming and strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We are striking the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorists; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorists' fundraising; Libya was secretly pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. That's the way the world was.

Because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan held Presidential elections last weekend and is an ally in the war on terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. We have led. Many have joined. And America and the world are safer.

After September the 11th, America had to assess every potential threat in a new light. It's one of the lessons of that fateful day. We confront an even greater danger, that the prospect of terrorists getting weapons of mass destruction would inflict great harm on America. We had to take a hard look at every place where terrorists might get those weapons.

And one regime stood out, the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. We knew his record of aggression and support for terror. We knew he hated America. We knew he had used weapons of mass destruction. We know that after September the 11th, we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. In Saddam, we saw a threat.

And I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the same intelligence I looked at. They remembered the same history I remembered. And they came to the same conclusion I came to, that Saddam Hussein was a threat. And they voted

to authorize the use of force. My opponent looked at the same intelligence, and he voted to authorize the use of force.

Before the United States ever commits troops into harm's way, we must try all means to deal with the threat. No President ever wants to send America's sons and daughters to war. So I worked to avoid that. And I went to the United Nations in the hopes that diplomacy would work. The United Nations had a debate. They looked at the same intelligence we were looking at. They passed another resolution telling Saddam Hussein to "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." I believe that when an international body speaks, it must mean what it says.

So we gave Saddam Hussein a final chance, and he continued to deceive the world. He was deceiving the weapons inspectors. And so I have a choice to make at this time in our history: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and take the word of a madman, or do I take action to defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Now, we didn't find the stockpiles that we all thought were there. But as the Duelfer report said, Saddam Hussein retained the intent and the capability to rebuild his weapons programs. He was gaming the Oil for Food Programme, using it to influence officials in other countries. Why? Because he wanted the world to look the other way, so he could restart his programs. The world is safer with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision.

Because we acted in Afghanistan and Iraq, America is safer and 50 million people now live in freedom. Think about what took place in Afghanistan this past weekend. It's an unbelievable story. Just 3½ years ago, people lived under the brutal dictatorship of the Taliban. These were people that wouldn't let many young girls go to school, and when women didn't agree with them, they took them in the public square and

whipped them and sometimes killed them in the sports stadium. These were brutal people. And because they're gone, Afghanistan held Presidential elections. The first voter was a 19-year-old woman who was able to express her opinion in the polls.

And Iraq has got a strong Prime Minister and a National Council, and national elections are scheduled for January. Think about how far that country has come from the days of torture chambers and mass graves. No, we're standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

We're also standing with them because a free Afghanistan and Iraq will make our country safer. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight the terrorists instead of harboring them, and that helps us keep the peace.

Our mission is clear. We will help those countries train armies so that the people of Afghanistan and Iraq can do the hard work of defending democracy. We'll help them get on the path to stability and self-govern as soon as possible, and then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a great United States military. And I want to thank the veterans who are here today for having set such a great example to those who wear the uniform. And I want to thank the military families who are here today. I've made a commitment to those who wear the uniform and to their families: They'll have all the resources they need to do their job.

That's why I went to the United States Congress in September of 2003 and asked for \$87 billion in supplemental funding to support our troops in harm's way in Afghanistan and Iraq. And this was essential funding. This was really important funding. We received great bipartisan support for

that funding. As a matter of fact, the support was so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against it. Now, when you're out there rounding up the vote, remind people there were only four United States Senators who voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against money necessary to support our troops in harm's way, and two of those are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You might remember my opponent's famous quote, "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." [Laughter] Now, I know something about eastern New Mexico and west Texas, and there are not many folks who talk like that in this part of the world. [Laughter] They kept pressing him, you know. He's given a lot of explanations for that vote. There are just too many to enumerate. [Laughter] One of my favorites is when he said, "Well, it's just a complicated matter." [Laughter] There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Now, on national security, my opponent has a record. He can run, but he can't hide from it. [Laughter] He voted against the weapons systems that helped our country win the cold war. He voted to cut America's intelligence budget by \$7.5 billion after 1993. That's after the World Trade Center got bombed for the first time. He now says he wants a "global test" before taking action to defend America's security.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's what he said. I'm not putting words in his mouth, either. [Laughter] The problem is the Senator can never pass his own test. [Laughter] Think about that. In 1990, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution supporting action to remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. The international community was united. Countries throughout the world joined our coalition. Yet in the United States Senate after the Security Council

resolution, Senator Kerry voted no on the authorization of force.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. See, if driving Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait with the support of the international community does not meet this test, then nothing will meet his test, and that's dangerous in the kind of world we live in. See, we have a different view of the world, a different view of America's role in confronting threats. Just this weekend, we saw new evidence that Senator Kerry fundamentally misunderstands the war on terror. Earlier he questioned whether it was really a war at all, describing it as primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation instead of a threat that demands the full use of American power.

Now, just this weekend, Senator Kerry talked of reducing terrorism to, quote, "nuisance," end quote, and compared it to prostitution and illegal gambling. See, I couldn't disagree more. Our goal is not to reduce terror to some acceptable level of nuisance. Our goal is to defeat terror by staying on the offensive, destroying terrorists, and spreading freedom and liberty around the world.

I'll always work with our friends and allies. Alliances are important, and over the next 4 years, we'll continue to build strong coalitions. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. I tell people about my relationship with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. I tell them that because it's an interesting lesson. You see, it wasn't all that long ago that we were fighting the Japanese. If you're 58 years old, it seems like an eternity, since it was 60 years ago. [Laughter] But my dad was in the war. I guarantee you there are people here in the audience who were touched by that war and had a granddad or a dad fight in that war.

And after we won, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, believed in

the power of liberty to transform societies, and he worked with the Japanese to help them develop a democracy. A lot of people questioned that. You know, there was a lot of pessimism after World War II. You can understand why. The Japanese were the enemy. Why do we care after we won? We had defeated them. A lot of people here's lives had been turned upside-down because a loved-one's life had been lost, and they didn't have—want to have anything to do with the enemy. But fortunately, there were people in this country who had the faith in the ability of liberty to transform societies. And so now I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi talking about the peace, talking about how to achieve the peace we want for our children and grandchildren.

I believe the same lessons apply for today. We will achieve a free Iraq. Iraq will be a democracy. And when we do so, at some point in time, an American President and a duly elected leader of Iraq will be sitting down talking about how to keep the peace. And our children and grandchildren will be able to live in a better world.

I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their freedom. I believe women want there to be a free society in the Middle East. I know they want their children to be able to grow up in a world in which they can realize their dreams. I believe that if given a chance, the people of the Middle East will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one

of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep faith in the values that makes us a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day that is indelibly etched in my memory. I will never forget it. There were workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember a man grabbing me by the arm, and looked me in the eyes, and he said, "Do not let me down." Ever since that day, I have awakened, working as hard as I possibly can to protect this country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State, I said if you gave me a chance to serve, I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

Thanks for coming. God bless. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:13 a.m. at the Lea County Event Center. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Cynthia Pearce, wife of Representative Stevan Pearce; Randy Neugebauer, candidate for Texas's 19th Congressional District; entertainer Mark Wills; Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico; Charles Duelfer, Special Advisor to the Director of Intelligence; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan. He also referred to the "Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq's WMD," issued September 30.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Senatorial Candidate Pete Coors in Denver, Colorado

October 11, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all for being here. I appreciate you coming. Nice to be back in Colorado. I've spent some quality time here in the past. I'm here asking for the vote. I'm here also asking—I'm here to say as clearly as I can say it, the right man for the United States Senate from the State of Colorado is Pete Coors.

And I want to thank you all for being here to help him. I like his judgment. I like his experience. I like his values. I like the fact that he is—will bring some commonsense to the Halls of the United States Senate. Oh, I might not get him to vote every way—every time the way I want him to—[*laughter*]*—he's kind of an independent fellow. [Laughter]* But I know I'll be able to count on him on the big issues.

Laura sends her best. We spent the evening in Crawford, which is a long way away from Washington, DC. [*Laughter*] And she is—she's resting up today, and she's going to take to the road tomorrow. She is a fabulous First Lady. I love her dearly. You know, when I met her she was a public school librarian. And she said, "Fine, I'll marry you"—after I asked her, of course—and she said, "just so long as I never have to give any speeches." [*Laughter*] I said, "You got a deal." [*Laughter*] Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that deal. She's speaking a lot, and the American people know her as a compassionate, warm, great First Lady.

And I'm proud of my runningmate, proud of Dick Cheney. I like to tell people, when he was debating John Edwards it was clear he didn't have the waviest hair on the platform. [*Laughter*] But I didn't pick him for his hair. [*Laughter*] I picked him because he's a man of great judgment, excellent experience, and he's doing a really good job as our Vice President.

And I appreciate Marilyn Coors for putting up with the race for the Senate. It's not easy when you're out there campaigning every day, but it's worthwhile, believe me. Public service, done the right way, is necessary for a good country. So thanks for doing what you're doing. It's good to see your mom, Pete. You and I share a strong-willed mother. [*Laughter*]

Pete's going to take the place of a good man in Ben Nighthorse Campbell. I like him. He's a good fellow, a good, solid citizen. And he'll serve side by side with another good man in Wayne Allard.

I appreciate your Governor. Bill Owens is doing a fine job. And Frances is one of our alltime favorites. Great to see you, Frances. Thank you for being here. I appreciate the fact that Congressman Joel Hefley is here, along with his wife, Lynn. Thanks for coming. That would be State Representative Lynn Hefley. Just don't challenge him in the primary sometime. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. Yes, that's right.

Tom Tancredo and Jackie are with us. Thanks, Tom and Jackie. Thanks for coming. Beauprez is here somewhere. Oh, there he is, yes—and Claudia. Thank you all for coming. It's good to see you all. I appreciate you're here. Finally got out of town, didn't you? [*Laughter*]

I want to thank all the State leaders who are here. I want to thank Bruce Benson, the campaign chairman for Pete. I wish Greg Walcher all the best in his race for the Third District of Colorado. Where is he? There he is, good.

Listen, thank you all for coming. I'm going to give a speech a little later on this evening, so I don't want to get too repetitive. But it's really time to start ginning up these voter turnout organizations. It's